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SEP 28 2009

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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 7,435,798 :  
Goddard, et al. : DECISION ON REQUEST FOR  
Issue Date: October 14, 2008 : RECONSIDERATION OF  
Application No. 10/063,546 : PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT  
Filed: May 2, 2002 :  
Attorney Docket No. P3230R1C001-168 :

This is in response to the "APPLICATION FOR PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.705(d)," filed December 15, 2008, requesting that the patent term adjustment determination for the above-identified patent be changed from four hundred thirty-seven (437) days to eight hundred fifty-eight (858) days.

The request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment is **DISMISSED**.

On October 14, 2008, the above-identified application matured into U.S. Patent No. 7,435,798 with a patent term adjustment of 437 days. This request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment (including the required fee) was timely filed within two months of the issue date of the patent, December 15, 2008 being a Monday. See 1.705(d).

Patentees request recalculation of the patent term adjustment based on the decision in *Wyeth v. Dudas*, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentees essentially assert that pursuant to *Wyeth*, a PTO delay under §154(b)(1)(A) overlaps with a delay under §154(b)(1)(B) only if the delays occur on the same day. Patentees maintain that a 421 day period of adjustment due to the Three Year Delay by the Office, pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.703(b), does not overlap with the period of adjustment due to examination delay, pursuant to 37 CFR §1.702(a), of 656 days, because these periods do not occur on the same day.

The Three Year Delay period is calculated based on the application having been filed under 35 U.S.C. §111(a) on May 2, 2002, and a request for continued examination (RCE) having been filed on June 28, 2006. The filing of a RCE cuts-off the applicants' ability to accumulate any additional patent term adjustment against the three-year pendency provision, but does not otherwise affect patent term adjustment. 37 CFR § 1.703(b)(1).

Accordingly, the period of adjustment under § 1.702(b) is 422 days, **not** 421 days as specified by patentees, counting the number of days beginning on May 3, 2005 and ending on June 28, 2006.

Patentees assert that in addition to the Three Year Delay period, they are entitled to a period of adjustment due to examination delay, pursuant to 37 CFR §1.702(a) of 656 days.

The 656 day period, pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(a) is the sum of:

- a period of delay of 631 days for the failure by the Office to mail at least one of a notification under 35 U.S.C. 132 not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a), pursuant to § 1.702(a)(1); and
- a period of delay of 25 days for the failure by the Office to respond to a reply under 35 U.S.C. 132 not later than four months after the date on which the reply was filed, pursuant to § 1.702(a)(2).

Under 37 CFR § 1.703(f), patentees are entitled to a period of patent term adjustment equal to the period of delays based on the grounds set forth in 37 CFR §1.702 reduced by the period of time equal to the period of time during which applicants failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude prosecution pursuant to 37 CFR §1.704. In other words, the period of Office delay reduced by the period of applicant delay. The period of reduction of 219 days for applicant delay is not in dispute.

Patentees agree that the total period of Office delay is the sum of the period of Three Years Delay terminated by the filing of a RCE (421 days, per patentees' calculation) and the period of Examination Delay (219 days) to the extent that these periods of delay are not overlapping.

Patentees contend that no portion of the periods of delay overlap.

Accordingly, patentees submit that the total period of Office Delay is 1,077 days, which is the sum of the period of Three Year Delay (421 days, per patentees' calculation) and the period of Examination Delay (656 days), reduced by the period of overlap (0 days, per patentees' calculation).

As such, patentees assert entitlement to a patent term adjustment of 858 days (421 + 656 reduced by 0 overlap - 219 days (applicant delay)).

Considering the Three Year Delay period is 422 days, not 421 days, patentees assertion of entitlement to patent term adjustment is deemed to be 859 days (422 + 656 reduced by 0 overlap - 219 days (applicant delay)).

The Office agrees that the actions detailed above were not taken within the specified time frames, and thus, the entry of period of adjustment of 656 days is correct. At issue is whether applicant should accrue 422 days of patent term adjustment (per patentees' definition of overlap) for the Office taking in excess of three years to issue the patent, as well as, 656 days for Office failure to take certain actions within specified time frames (or examination delay).

The Office contends that all 422 days overlap. Patentees' calculation of the period of overlap is inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of this provision. 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

Likewise, 37 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 56366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See also *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See also *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

The current wording of § 1.703(f) was revised in response to the misinterpretation of this provision by a number of applicants. The rule was slightly revised to more closely track the

corresponding language of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). The relevant portion differs only to the extent that the statute refers back to provisions of the statute whereas the rule refers back to sections of the rule. This was not a substantive change to the rule nor did it reflect a change of the Office's interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). As stated in the *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed. The grounds specified in these sections cover the A) guarantee of prompt Patent and Trademark Office responses, B) guarantee of no more than 3 year application pendency, and C) guarantee or adjustments for delays due to interference, secrecy orders and appeals. A section by section analysis of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) specifically provides that:

Section 4402 imposes limitations on restoration of term. In general, pursuant to [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(2)(A)-(C), total adjustments granted for restorations under [35 U.S.C. 154](b)(1) are reduced as follows: (1) To the extent that there are multiple grounds for extending the term of a patent that may exist simultaneously (e.g., delay due to a secrecy order under [35 U.S.C.] 181 and administrative delay under [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(1)(A)), the term should not be extended for each ground of delay but only for the actual number of days that the issuance of a patent was delayed; See 145 Cong. Rec. S14,718<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The AIPA is title IV of the Intellectual Property and Communications Omnibus Reform Act of 1999 (S. 1948), which was incorporated and enacted as law as part of Pub. L. 106-113. The Conference Report for H.R. 3194, 106<sup>th</sup> Cong. 1<sup>st</sup> Sess. (1999), which resulted in Pub. L. 106-113,

As such, the period for over 3 year pendency does not overlap only to the extent that the actual dates in the period beginning three years after the date on which the application was filed overlap with the actual dates in the periods for failure of the Office to take action within specified time frames. In other words, consideration of the overlap does not begin three years after the filing date of the application.

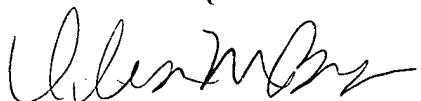
It is noted, however, that delays resulting in the Office's failure to meet the time frames specified in 35 U.S.C. 154 (b) (1) (A) (the "fourteen-four-four-four" provisions) are not always overlapping with a delay resulting in the Office's failure to issue a patent within the three-year time frame specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) because not all application pendency time is counted toward this three-year period. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii).

In this instance, all application pendency time is not counted toward the three-year period. A request for continued examination was filed on June 28, 2006. The period subsequent to the filing of the RCE is not included in the three-year time frame specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B). See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i). Thus, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) is the period from the filing of the application on May 2, 2002, to the filing of the RCE, on June 28, 2006. Thus, only the 631 days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the filing of the RCE for the Office failing to respond within a specified time frame is considered in determining overlap. The 25 days for Office delay occurring subsequent to the filing of the RCE is not considered. The 422 days attributed to Office delay pursuant to 37 CFR 1.702(b) for failure to issue the patent within three years is determined to overlap with the 631 days attributed to Office delay pursuant to 1.702(a)(1). Accordingly, at issuance, the Office properly entered no additional days of patent term adjustment for the Office taking in excess of 3 years to issue the patent. 656 (631 + 25) days was determined to be the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

In view thereof, the Office affirms that the revised determination of patent term adjustment at the time of the issuance of the patent is 437 days (656 - 422 - 422 overlap - 219).

The Office acknowledges submission of the \$200.00 fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e). No additional fees are required.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to Shirene Willis Brantley, Senior Petitions Attorney, at (571) 272-3230.



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